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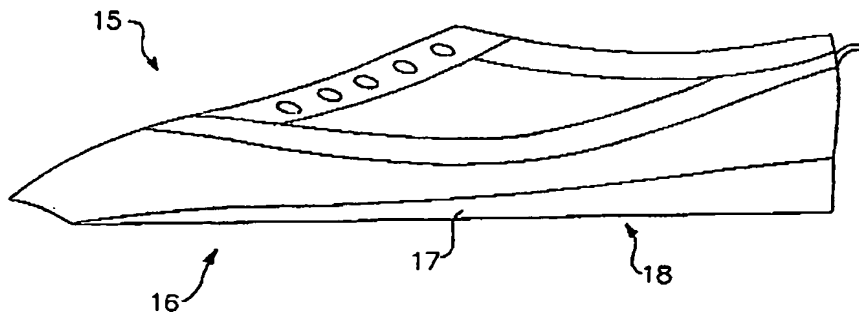
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- (71) Applicants and
(72) Inventors: **BRUCE, Darren, Paul** [AU/AU]; 25 McLean Road, Campbelltown, NSW 2560 (AU). **LIVINGSTONE, Mark, David** [AU/AU]; 3 Seddon Place, Campbelltown, NSW 2560 (AU).
- (74) Agent: **WALLINGTON-DUMMER**; GPO Box 3888, Sydney, NSW 2001 (AU).
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(54) Title: INTERCHANGEABLE FOOTWEAR SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: An interchangeable footwear system comprising a shoe assembly including: (a) a base shoe; (b) interchangeable covers, in which any one of a plurality of said covers are adapted to allow fitting to said base shoe forming an assembly so as to change the appearance and use environment of said shoe assembly.

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INTERCHANGEABLE FOOTWEAR SYSTEM

The present invention relates to shoes and more particularly to shoes adapted to accept a range of interchangeable covers so as to alter appearance.

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BACKGROUND

Footwear has long come to serve additional functions to that of mere utility. The desirability for variations of style, colour and decoration, particularly in the areas of children's, ladies' and sport related footwear requires the purchase of multiple pairs of shoes. Moreover, to change from one style or appearance of footwear to another while away from home, requires that additional bulky pairs of shoes are taken along.

15 It is an object of the present invention to address or ameliorate at least one of the above disadvantages.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

Accordingly, in one broad form of the invention there is provided an interchangeable footwear system comprising a shoe assembly including

- (a) a base shoe
- (b) interchangeable covers

in which any one of a plurality of said covers are adapted to allow fitting to said base shoe forming an assembly so as to change the appearance and use environment of said shoe assembly.

5 Preferably said base shoe comprises a sole portion and an upper portion.

Preferably said sole portion is provided with an upwardly extending perimeter rim portion.

10 Preferably said upwardly extending perimeter rim portion is provided with a first mating element.

Preferably said interchangeable covers are provided with a second mating element along the lower perimeter of said covers,

Preferably said first mating element is female.

15 Preferably said first mating element is male.

Preferably said second mating element is male.

Preferably said second mating element is female.

Preferably said first and second mating elements are substantially V-shaped in section.

20 Preferably said V-shaped sections of said mating elements are provided with matching protrusions and recesses so as to provide a snap-fit when said cover is assembled to said base shoe.

Preferably said base shoes are provided in a range of shapes, and sizes.

Preferably said covers are provided in a matching range of shapes and sizes adapted to fit said base shoes.

5 Preferably said covers are provided in a range of colours and patterns.

Preferably said base shoe and said covers are made from any of a selection of materials, said selection including leather, canvas, rubber, plastic and other
10 synthetic materials.

Preferably a one of said covers includes an indicia-receiving portion.

Preferably said indicia-receiving portion is adapted to display promotional indicia.

15 In a further broad form of the invention there is provided a method of altering the appearance of a shoe, said method comprising utilising the interchangeable footwear system of any preceding claim.

20 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a side elevation view of a base shoe according to an embodiment of the present invention,

Figure 2 is a side elevation view of a shoe cover according a preferred embodiment of the invention,

5 Figure 3 is a detail of a cross section of the mating system between base shoe and cover according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

10 A first preferred embodiment of a interchangeable footwear system according to the invention will now be described with reference to Figures 1 and 2.

A base shoe 10 is provided with a sole 11 and upper portion 12. Sole 11 is further provided around its perimeter with an upwardly extending rim portion 13. Both
15 sole 11 and upper portion 12 may be constructed from conventional shoe materials including leather, canvas, rubber, plastic and other synthetic materials.

Preferably rim portion 13 is formed from a moulded
20 resilient material and forms a first mating element 14.

With reference to Figure 2, shoe cover 15 consists of a sheath open at its underside 16 and provided around its lower perimeter 17 with second mating element 18. Cover 15 is adapted to slip over the upper portion 12 of base shoe

10 with first and second mating elements 14 and 18 engaging so as to retain cover 15 on base shoe 10.

Figure 3 shows a preferred embodiment of mating elements 14 and 18 where the perimeter rim portion 13 of base shoe sole 11 is provided with female moulded engagement means 19 and the lower perimeter 17 of cover 15 is provided with moulded male engagement means 20.

In the embodiment of Figure 3, sole portion female engagement means 19 is provided with a substantially V-shaped section 21 having projections 22 and recesses 23 along both inner surfaces of the V. Upper portion 15 male engagement means 20 has matching V-shaped section 24 with like projections 25 and recesses 26 such that the projections 22 and recesses 23 of sole portion female engagement means 19 provide a snap fit with recesses 26 and projections 25 of upper portion male engagement means.

Preferably lower perimeter 17 may be provided with waterproofing lip 27 so as to prevent ingress of water into the engagement means.

20 Preferably base shoes 10 may be provided with a plainly constructed upper portions 12 providing no more than a scaffold for the addition of covers. Alternatively, upper portions 12 of base shoes 10 may be adapted to a particular appearance or use environment.

In a further preferred embodiment, covers may be provided with logos or other proprietary indicia, or otherwise personalized to reflect an interest or taste of the wearer.

5 In use, covers are made available in a matching range of sizes and shapes to suit base shoes. A wearer may purchase a pair of base shoes with or without one or more covers. Further covers may be purchased subsequently.

10 Although the above description refers to shoes it will be understood that the concept of the invention may be applied to other forms of footwear including boots and certain configurations of sandals.

The above describes only some embodiments of the present invention and modifications, obvious to those
15 skilled in the art, can be made thereto without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. An interchangeable footwear system comprising a shoe assembly including
 - (a) a base shoe
 - 5 (b) interchangeable coversin which any one of a plurality of said covers are adapted to allow fitting to said base shoe forming an assembly so as to change the appearance and use environment of said shoe assembly.
- 10 2. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 1 wherein said base shoe comprises a sole portion and an upper portion.
3. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 2 wherein said sole portion is provided with an upwardly
15 extending perimeter rim portion.
4. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 4 wherein said upwardly extending perimeter rim portion is provided with a first mating element.
5. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 4 wherein
20 said interchangeable covers are provided with a second mating element along the lower perimeter of said covers,
6. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 5 wherein said first mating element is female.

7. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 6 wherein said first mating element is male.
8. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 7 wherein said second mating element is male.
- 5 9. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 8 wherein said second mating element is female.
10. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 9 wherein said first and second mating elements are substantially V-shaped in section.
- 10 11. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 10 wherein said V-shaped sections of said mating elements are provided with matching protrusions and recesses so as to provide a snap-fit when said cover is assembled to said base shoe.
- 15 12. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 11 wherein said base shoes are provided in a range of shapes, and sizes.
13. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 12 wherein said covers are provided in a matching range
20 of shapes and sizes adapted to fit said base shoes.
14. The interchangeable footwear system of claim 13 wherein said covers are provided in a range of colours and patterns.

15. The interchangeable footwear system of any preceding claim wherein said base shoe and said covers are made from any of a selection of materials, said selection including leather, canvas, rubber, plastic and other synthetic materials.

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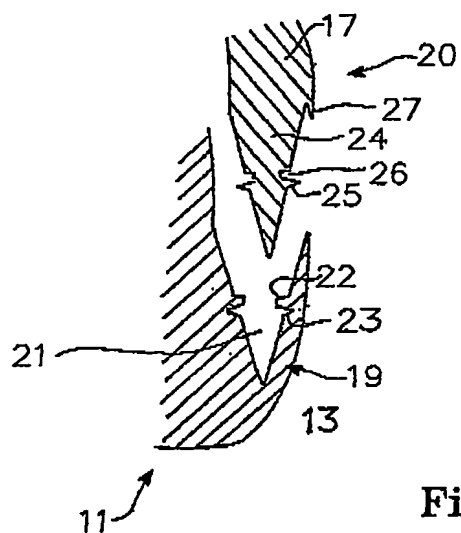
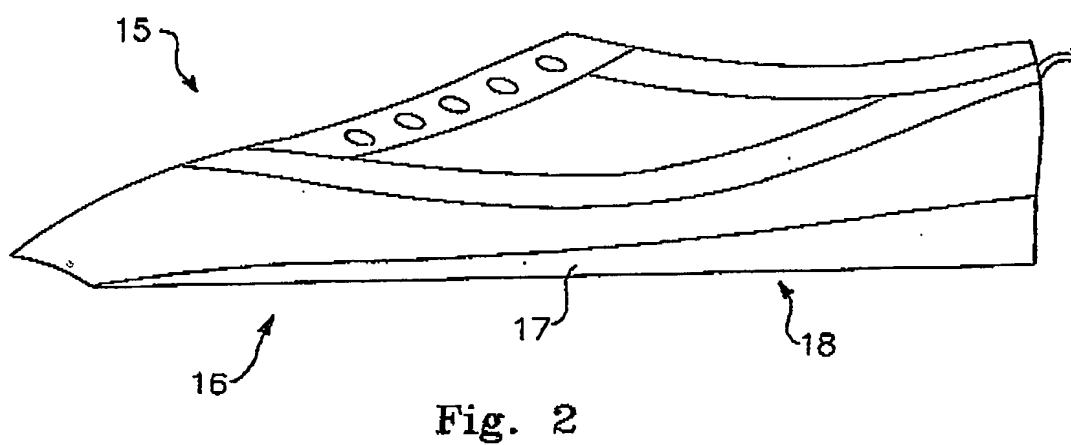
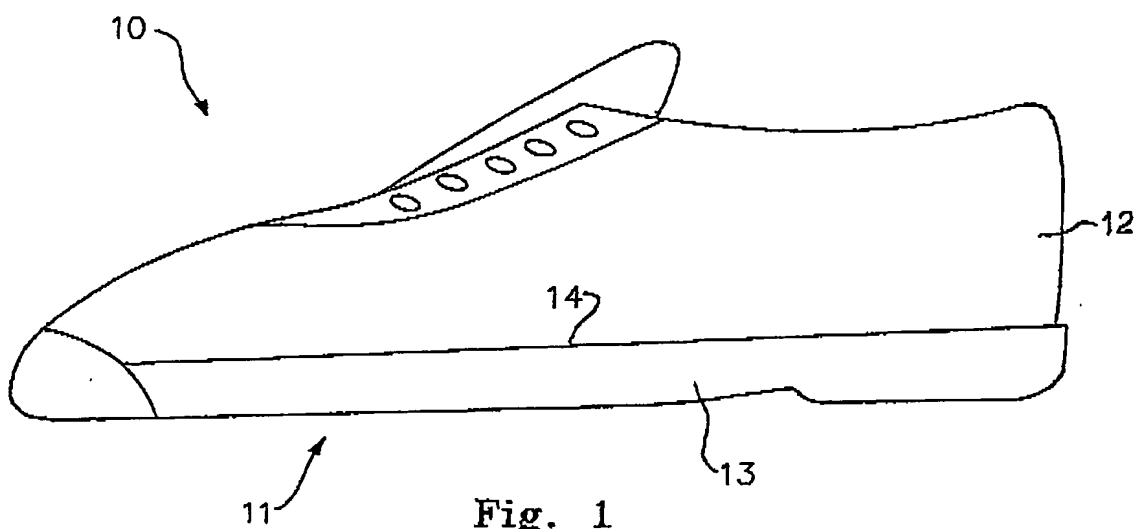
16. The interchangeable footwear system of any preceding claim wherein a one of said covers includes an indicia-receiving portion.

17. The interchangeable footwear system of Claim 16 wherein said indicia-receiving portion is adapted to display promotional indicia.

10

18. A method of altering the appearance of a shoe, said method comprising utilising the interchangeable footwear system of any preceding claim.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU03/00314

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTERInt. Cl. ⁷: A43B 3/24

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

AU IPC A43B 3/24

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DWPI & Keywords: shoe, boot, footwear, cover, upper, top, overshoe, convert, change, swap, replace, multi, look, appear, use, style, decorate, fashion and similar terms.

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5778564 A (KETTNER) 14 July 1998 figure 5, column 4, lines 33-35	1, 2, 15-18
X	FR 2659837 A1 (DE CREPY) 27 September 1991 figure 1	1, 2, 15-18
X	US 5566477 A (MATHIS et al.) 22 October 1996 whole document	1, 2, 15-18

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C☒ See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

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Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustalia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer Geoff Sadlier Telephone No : (02) 6283 2114

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C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5311676 A (HUGHES et al.) 17 May 1994 whole document	1, 2, 15-18
X	US 3994080 A (FLANAGAN, Jr. et al.) 30 November 1976 whole document	1, 2, 15-18
X	US 6212797 B1 (MERRY et al.) 10 April 2001 whole document	1, 2, 15-18

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/AU03/00314

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member
US	5778564	NONE
FR	2659837	NONE
US	5566477	NONE
US	5311676	NONE
US	3994080	NONE
US	6212797	NONE
END OF ANNEX		